



General Assembly

February Session, 2010

**Amendment**

LCO No. 4021

**\*HB0536004021HD0\***

Offered by:

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To: Subst. House Bill No. 5360

File No. 324

Cal. No. 179

**"AN ACT CONCERNING CHILDREN IN THE RECESSION."**

1 Strike everything after the enacting clause and substitute the  
2 following in lieu thereof:

3 "Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) The Child Poverty and  
4 Prevention Council, established pursuant to section 4-67x of the  
5 general statutes, shall constitute the children in the recession  
6 leadership team to make recommendations for the state's emergency  
7 response to children affected by the recession. The council may  
8 establish a subcommittee to act for it under this section. For purposes  
9 of this section, the council or a subcommittee established under this  
10 subsection shall meet quarterly if the unemployment rate of the state,  
11 as reported by the Labor Commissioner, is eight per cent or greater for  
12 the preceding three months.

13 (b) The council shall work in consultation with other government  
14 agencies to develop and promote policies, practices and procedures,  
15 within available appropriations, that (1) mitigate the long-term impact

16 of economic recessions on children; (2) provide appropriate assistance  
17 and resources to families to minimize the number of children who  
18 enter poverty as a result of the recession; and (3) reduce human and  
19 fiscal costs of recessions, including foreclosures, child hunger, family  
20 violence, school failure, youth runaways, homelessness, child abuse  
21 and neglect.

22 (c) For purposes of this section, the council, within available  
23 appropriations, shall utilize strategies to mitigate the impact of the  
24 recession on children that include, but are not limited to, the following:  
25 (1) Resource information sharing and strategic planning to address  
26 emergency response to children in the recession; (2) training of  
27 pertinent personnel on the availability of services, access points and  
28 interventions across agencies, including child trauma treatment; (3)  
29 development of linkages between job training and education programs  
30 and services; (4) development and implementation of efforts to  
31 coordinate outreach and improve access to services, including the  
32 establishment of multiple enrollment sites where feasible; (5) reduction  
33 of current response times to clients for safety net programs, including,  
34 but not limited to, the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance  
35 Program, the federal Special Supplemental Food Program for Women,  
36 Infants and Children, the National School Lunch Program and other  
37 federal child nutrition programs, the temporary family assistance  
38 program, the child care subsidy program, heating and rental  
39 assistance, eviction prevention services and free and reduced  
40 preschool meal programs; (6) identification of appropriate revisions to  
41 regulations and procedures to be streamlined to increase program  
42 access; (7) maximization of availability of targeted case management  
43 and intervention services; (8) assessment of the unique needs of  
44 children of soldiers serving or returning from war or other military  
45 service; and (9) maximization of all federal funding opportunities.

46 (d) Not later than January 1, 2011, the council shall prepare a report  
47 on (1) the progress in implementing the provisions of this section; and  
48 (2) other government actions taken to reduce the impact of the  
49 recession on children and families. Such report shall be submitted to

50 the select committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of  
51 matters relating to children and to the joint standing committees of the  
52 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to  
53 appropriations and the budgets of state agencies and human services.

54 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) The Department of Social  
55 Services, in consultation with the Labor Department and the  
56 Departments of Education, Public Health and Children and Families,  
57 shall seek, within available appropriations, to promote efficiency,  
58 reduce costs and administrative error rates and simplify the  
59 application process for families eligible for benefits by streamlining  
60 and integrating public information and access to programs.

61 (b) For the purpose of subsection (a) of this section, the Department  
62 of Social Services shall develop, within available appropriations, a plan  
63 for a comprehensive state service approach that may include (1) the  
64 development and promotion of a single, simplified, on-line application  
65 and enrollment process for programs administered by the Department  
66 of Social Services that serve children or families; (2) the use of the  
67 Internet to develop and increase public access to on-line screening  
68 tools, benefit calculators and on-line applications that facilitate prompt  
69 access to programs administered by the Department of Social Services  
70 and benefit information; and (3) the promotion of access to direct  
71 assistance with application and enrollment processes through  
72 community-based organizations. Not later than January 31, 2011, the  
73 department shall submit the plan to the joint standing committee of the  
74 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to human  
75 services and to the select committee of the General Assembly having  
76 cognizance of matters relating to children. The department may  
77 consult with and accept donations from philanthropic organizations to  
78 accomplish the purposes of this section.

79 (c) The Department of Social Services shall develop, in accordance  
80 with the provisions of federal law, a client-friendly application process  
81 which shall not require applications to be resubmitted if a family  
82 applied for services and, not more than thirty days after the date the

83 application was submitted, the family experienced a change in  
84 circumstances or the program closed to intake applications and then  
85 reopened.

86 Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) The Department of Social  
87 Services shall provide timely public notice if, for any reason, the child  
88 care subsidy program closes intake. The department shall notify the  
89 public if the program eligibility or status has been altered. Any change  
90 in eligibility or program terms, except opening of the program or  
91 expansion in eligibility, shall be effective not less than thirty days after  
92 public notice of such change.

93 Sec. 4. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) The Department of Social  
94 Services, in consultation with appropriate state agencies and within  
95 available appropriations, shall (1) allocate existing funding and  
96 resources to ensure the availability of homeless shelters that accept  
97 intact families or that assist families to find adequate alternative  
98 arrangements that allow the family to remain together; (2) review  
99 program eligibility requirements and other policies to ensure that  
100 unaccompanied homeless children have access, to the fullest extent  
101 practicable, to critical services that such children might otherwise have  
102 been prevented from receiving due to age or guardianship  
103 requirements; and (3) work, in accordance with state and federal law,  
104 to seek relief from income garnishment orders through the appropriate  
105 judicial authority if it is deemed appropriate to be in the best interests  
106 of children and families.

107 (b) The Department of Education, in consultation with appropriate  
108 departments, shall seek full utilization of the federal McKinney-Vento  
109 Homeless Assistance Act to protect children falling into homelessness  
110 from school failure and dropping out of school and to improve access  
111 to higher education.

112 Sec. 5. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) The Departments of Social  
113 Services, Public Health and Education shall collaborate to decrease  
114 hunger resulting from the recession by coordinating, within available

115 appropriations, state-wide public access, information and outreach,  
116 and promoting, within available appropriations, cross-referral and  
117 collocation of entry points and application processes for the federal  
118 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, child nutrition programs  
119 and the federal Special Supplemental Food Program for Women,  
120 Infants and Children and increase federal reimbursements.

121 Sec. 6. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2010*) (a) The Department of  
122 Education shall administer, within available appropriations, a child  
123 nutrition outreach program to increase (1) participation in the federal  
124 School Breakfast Program, federal Summer Food Service Program and  
125 federal Child and Adult Care Food Program; and (2) federal  
126 reimbursement for such programs.

127 (b) The child nutrition outreach program shall:

128 (1) Encourage schools to (A) participate in the federal School  
129 Breakfast Program; (B) employ innovative breakfast service methods  
130 where students eat their breakfast in their classrooms or elsewhere  
131 after school starts, rather than only before school and only in the  
132 cafeteria; and (C) apply to the in-classroom breakfast grant program  
133 pursuant to section 10-215g of the general statutes;

134 (2) (A) Encourage local and regional school districts to sponsor  
135 Summer Food Service Program sites; (B) recruit other sponsors of such  
136 sites; and (C) make grants to site sponsors to assist them in increasing  
137 child participation;

138 (3) Encourage day care centers to participate in the Child and Adult  
139 Care Food Program; and

140 (4) Publicize the availability of federally-funded child nutrition  
141 programs throughout the state.

142 Sec. 7. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) The Department of Social  
143 Services shall maximize federal fund opportunities from the  
144 Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Emergency Fund

145 established pursuant to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act  
146 P.L. 111-5, in order to assist families facing unemployment, housing  
147 crises, increasing debt, homelessness or other hardships. The  
148 department shall seek to utilize, in accordance with the provisions of  
149 federal law:

150 (1) The nonrecurrent, short-term benefits category of the Temporary  
151 Assistance for Needy Families Emergency Fund for eligible purposes,  
152 including, but not limited to, housing, transportation, work expenses,  
153 family safety, low birth weight reduction, food and nutrition. The  
154 benefits funded pursuant to this subdivision may include, but not be  
155 limited to, mortgage assistance, eviction relief, car repair, work clothes,  
156 domestic violence services, home visitation and on-the-job training;  
157 and

158 (2) The subsidized employment category of the Temporary  
159 Assistance for Needy Families Emergency Fund for eligible purposes,  
160 including, but not limited to, youth employment programs and the  
161 alleviation of specific labor shortages and state worker shortages  
162 where the jobs created help families apply for state services.

163 (b) The department shall work with the private sector, including  
164 philanthropic, business and nonprofit agencies as well as any  
165 consortium of such groups, for eligible purposes and as third-party  
166 participants to qualify for, access and maximize federal funding from  
167 said emergency fund through donation, in-kind spending and training  
168 of subsidized workers.

169 (c) The department shall implement the provisions of this section  
170 within available resources.

171 Sec. 8. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) Not more than sixty days after  
172 the effective date of this section, the Department of Social Services,  
173 within available appropriations and to the extent permitted by federal  
174 law, shall establish and implement a procedure for the following  
175 modification in the temporary assistance of needy families program  
176 whenever the state unemployment rate, as reported by the Labor

177 Commissioner, is eight per cent or greater for the preceding three  
178 months. The Jobs First program shall permit and encourage parents to  
179 pursue education and training and shall approve, as work activities,  
180 two-and four-year degree programs. A recipient shall be eligible for  
181 assistance under this modification for at least six months even if the  
182 state unemployment rate for subsequent quarters is not eight per cent  
183 or greater. The department may seek federal support to pay for such  
184 modifications through funds provided from the federal Temporary  
185 Assistance for Needy Families Emergency Fund.

186 Sec. 9. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) The Department of Public  
187 Health, within available appropriations and in consultation with the  
188 Departments of Social Services and Education, shall seek to reduce the  
189 incidence of low birth weight among infants and reduce the cost to the  
190 state from unnecessary hospitalizations of such infants by (1)  
191 maximizing coenrollment in the federal Special Supplemental Food  
192 Program for Women, Infants and Children and Medicaid for all  
193 eligible women; (2) encouraging tobacco cessation programs targeted  
194 to pregnant women; and (3) promoting the use of the centering  
195 pregnancy model of prenatal care. The department may recover the  
196 costs of implementing the provisions of this section through funds  
197 available from the Tobacco and Health Trust Fund established under  
198 section 4-28f of the general statutes and the federal Temporary  
199 Assistance for Needy Families Emergency Fund.

200 Sec. 10. (*Effective from passage*) The Commission on Children, in  
201 consultation with the private sector, shall research the viability of  
202 enacting a state children and the recession fund that would provide  
203 funds and low-interest loans to families facing short-term crisis in  
204 housing, utilities, hunger and unemployment. Not later than January  
205 1, 2011, the commission shall report, in accordance with the provisions  
206 of section 11-4a of the general statutes, its findings to the joint standing  
207 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters  
208 relating to appropriations and the budgets of state agencies.

209 Sec. 11. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) The Commission on Children

210 shall coordinate information on youth leadership opportunities that  
211 keep youth engaged in the community. The commission shall inform  
212 the General Assembly and the public of such opportunities.

213 Sec. 12. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) No cause of action or liability  
214 shall arise against the state, any of its agencies or subdivisions, or any  
215 state official, employee or agent, for failure to comply with the  
216 provisions of sections 1 to 9, inclusive, of this act.

217 Sec. 13. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) The Department of Social  
218 Services shall submit a report on the policies and interventions  
219 promoted pursuant to sections 2 and 3 of this act, subsection (a) of  
220 section 4 of this act and sections 7 and 8 of this act. The report shall  
221 include key outcome indicators and measures and set benchmarks for  
222 evaluating progress in accomplishing the purposes of said sections.  
223 The department shall submit the report on or before January 1, 2011, to  
224 the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having  
225 cognizance of matters relating to appropriations and the budgets of  
226 state agencies, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the  
227 general statutes.

228 (b) The Department of Education shall submit a report on the  
229 policies and interventions promoted pursuant to subsection (b) of  
230 section 4 and section 6 of this act. The report shall include key outcome  
231 indicators and measures and set benchmarks for evaluating progress  
232 in accomplishing the purposes of said sections. The department shall  
233 submit the report on or before January 1, 2011, to the joint standing  
234 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters  
235 relating to appropriations and the budgets of state agencies, in  
236 accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes.

237 (c) The Department of Public Health shall submit a report on the  
238 policies and interventions promoted pursuant to section 9 of this act.  
239 The report shall include key outcome indicators and measures and set  
240 benchmarks for evaluating progress in accomplishing the purposes of  
241 said section. The department shall submit the report on or before



242 January 1, 2011, to the joint standing committee of the General  
 243 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to appropriations and  
 244 the budgets of state agencies, in accordance with the provisions of  
 245 section 11-4a of the general statutes."

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 3	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 4	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 5	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 6	<i>July 1, 2010</i>	New section
Sec. 7	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 8	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 9	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 10	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 11	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 12	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 13	<i>from passage</i>	New section